



LANTERN

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Due to unforeseen personal circumstances of your Editor (which I won't bore you with here), it was not possible to bring out the Spring edition of LANTERN as planned. Apologies to all subscribers who waited in vain for it to arrive and who, by now, no doubt imagine that LANTERN has gone to the wall!

However, to make up for the lack of a Spring issue, we bring you a special 'double' Summer issue, a few weeks earlier than its normal publication date. This double issue has given us the opportunity to put into print a full-length article by Mike Burgess detailing his investigations and research into that legendary Norfolk giant Tom Hickathrift; an article which would have lost something if we had had to spread it across three or four normal-sized issues of LANTERN. In the last issue of LANTERN it was announced that this issue would carry more details of the apparition seen on the A12 near Lowestoft. Since then some interesting discoveries have been made regarding this 'ghost' and the resulting article, which has now grown somewhat, will be held over until next issue due to lack of space.

Which brings us to the Autumn issue, which will mark a large change in the format of LANTERN, as it will be produced in A5/litho. This reduced size will help us cut down on the postage and handling charges and at the same time IMPROVE THE presentation of articles etc., especially from the point of view of drawings and illustrations.

Finally, we once again ask everyone to keep the articles, press-cuttings etc., coming in. Your support in the way of articles will ensure that LANTERN continues to cover the widest range possible of East Anglian curiosities.

Ivan Bunn.

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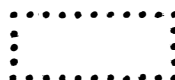
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LANTERN is a quarterly magazine of East Anglian mysteries and curiosities; comprising of news, articles, notes and reviews. It is published by the Borderline Science Investigation Group - a non-profit organisation devoted to the investigation of unexplained phenomena in East Anglia.

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IF THERE IS A CROSS IN THE BOX BELOW THEN IT MEANS THAT
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS NOW DUE FOR RENEWAL



In the Winter 1980 issue of LANTERN (No.32,p.12), we wrote of the experience of Anne Clarke of Lowestoft who, on December 28th, 1980, saw two odd, hooded figures by the side of the A12 road near Blythburgh, Suffolk. The February 1981 issue of the Waveney Clarion (Vol.9, No.2, p.7) carried a follow-up article to this story when Anne, together with the Editor of the Clarion and a couple of friends returned to the spot for a look around. With the kind permission of the Editor of the Waveney Clarion, we reproduce that article here, under its original title:

C O U L D B E C O M E A H A B I T

The windscreen wipers intermittently moaned. It was cold, damp, low mournful cloud lay overhead. We were possibly late (though we didn't know if the time was significant).

"How did you feel last time, Anne?"

"Relaxed. Just going out for a drink in the country, sitting in the back. Quiet and relaxed."

I tried to relax. But knowing that I was tense for no 'rational' reason meant that serenity was difficult to achieve. We were on an expedition into the unknown (especially as the accelerator cable was still held on by a length of rubber windscreen beading. - that was a coincidence. We were.....). We were going to look at the place where two apparitions had been seen, partly to ascertain if there was anything physical which would account for the appearance of the hooded figures, and partly to locate the exact spot.

The Blythburgh bend. We slowed. Past the road signs.

"Are we there yet?"

"We're way past it", I said, trying not to gloat, "or where you described it anyway."

"No, No, It's here. I know."

I drove on, past the police car lurking in the open, turned round at the White Hart. The police car had gone. I pulled over onto the verge where Anne Clarke asked me.

Anne leaped out. Here, it was just here. They were on a fence. Then they ... look the branches are bent, like a fence. She (I reached for a fag. I was swept with fear. I'd given up).

Anne had gone 20 yards down the road in the direction of the village.

"It was here, I can feel it".

There was a gate set well back, which you can't see from a car travelling south.

A car went by. There didn't seem to be any way the scraggy branches or wilting grass could be mistaken for two dark-habited cowed monks, even in the reflected light of headlamps. And it

hadn't been raining the previous time.

I collected the car, and we repaired to the White Hart for further discussion.

THE INCIDENT

On Sunday 28th December, 1980, Anne Clarke was in a car travelling south down the A12. She was sitting in the back. Just past the Southwold turn she saw, through the front offside part of the windscreen, a figure sitting on a fence well back from the right-hand roadside. As she watched, it got off the fence, and walked to the edge of the road, followed by another figure. Both wore long and voluminous cloaks or habits, heavily cowled so their faces were obscured. Their hands were held high in front of them, holding white cards or something similar.

Anne's first thought "Stupid place to hitch-hike", and her second "Fancy dress party", were both undermined, for she turned to watch them out of the back window. The figures had disappeared.

Nobody else in the car had seen the figures.

The next day, Anne rang Ivan Bunn of the Borderline Science Investigation Group, and recounted her story....

HISTORY HINTS

If one assumes that Ms Clarke saw two figures dressed in a fashion not common these days, specially on the A12 on a cool Sunday night in the middle of winter, and that they inexplicably disappeared, then one thinks ofghosts. But after that you start wondering if there is any reason for these particular ghosts. Hence our trip back, to see if there was anything there that might explain the vision. We didn't find anything. Anne knows she saw them, so is there any information which would give substance to the sighting?

POACHERS

Janet Becker's book 'Blythburgh' con-

tains several references to a priory, situated behind and to the east of Blythburgh church. It was the home of Austin or Black Canons.

The priory wasn't an immense thriving place - in 1475 there were 3 canons ('History of Dunwich' by Gardener)- and they were not rich; "The Manor Rolls hint that some of them occupied their time poaching the rabbits in the Lord's warrens on the heath." (Becker).

This order of Canons, apparently, were expected to enter secular society on occasions and work amongst the people. So the appearance of the figures outside of the priory is acceptable.

TENUOUS THEORY

When Anne was describing the 'monks' she said they took peculiarly small steps, and she felt they were ill or probably weak. Though there is probably no relationship at all, it is interesting to note that in 1879, while making an embankment for the 'Great Bridge'

(near enough where the present crossing is), workers found many skulls and skeletons. Several of the workers and passersby who handled the bones were attacked by a virulent disease.

One man and a boy died. Could the skeletons have included Canons from the priory, who had suffered greatly during the Black Death?

OTHER EXPERIENCES

One further oddity. A gentleman named Geoffrey Waterson was in the area just after Christmas, and when Anne began describing her experience - without saying, I think, where - he exclaimed "God, not at Blythburgh."

Geoff's somewhat surprising reaction was easily explained. He had been hitching back from London, and was having a desperate time. It was very late. As he walked up the A12, just round the bend from the Southwold turn (north of the other side) he suddenly felt frightened (his hair actually stood on end), nauseous and very depressed. He kept walking, and within a few yards the feelings left him as quickly as they'd arrived. Co-incidence? Odd, anyway.....

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FROM the Eastern Daily Press, June 10, 1981

"Mystery surrounds the eerie turning in of a stone cross in Swaffham's parish churchyard. The stone is situated between Sexton's House and the church, and was placed there when the churchyard was reorganised, when many of the older stones were arranged in neat lines to allow easier tidying of the grounds. But now the gravestone of Miss Ella Morse, who died at the age of 37 in 1852, is moving. The grass around the base of the cross lies flattened bearing evidence of a twisting action. Having turned through 90 degrees the white stone cross now faces north to south, in contrast to every other cross in the churchyard - even those right next to it....

The turning was first noticed by church sexton Mr. Frederick Sandell, during his walks from his house to the church, and he has carefully noted the position by taking a line along the face of the cross to a fixed point.

Over the past 7 years the cross has changed position and Mr. Sandell's friends who make yearly visits to Swaffham always notice a definite change. ...although he has an open mind about supernatural explanations, local historian Mr. Reg Drake, of 12 Pedlars Grove, is trying to find out something about Miss Ella Morse. So far his research has revealed that she was the daughter of Swaffham brewer Mr. Frederick Morse, who paid £400 for the stained glass window in the church chancel in memory of Ella, and also placed brasses to her memory in the church in 1853, a year after her death. Mr. Drake's brother, Mr. Eric Drake, feels there may be more to those memorials than meets the eye. He suspects the gifts might have been ways of easing the conscience of Ella's family - none of the many daughters buried in the churchyard are commemorated in such a way.

"Was Ella Morse mad, or did she do something her family wanted to expiate?" asked Mr. Drake. "We don't know, but it would be intriguing to find out more about her."

Although Mr. Drake does not believe Ella was a witch, he points out that the inscription is similar to words chanted at the burial of witches, to protect

(cont. on back page)

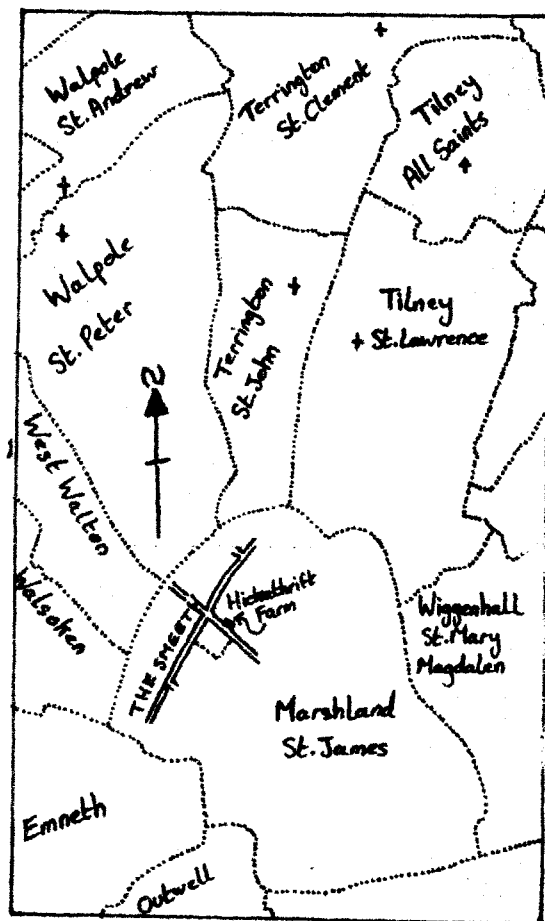
THE NORFOLK GIANT

by
M. Burgess

APART from one extremely dubious tale in Charles Sampson's 'Ghosts of the Broad's', East Anglia can lay claim to only one traditional giant: namely TOM HICKATHRIFT, the giant of the Norfolk Marshland. Tom is mentioned many times in works on local folklore, but a serious attempt has never been made to follow up the dozens of different threads of legend and discover Tom's ultimate origins. This is what I am currently trying to do, and the task is so involved that this article can only hope to lay the foundations for a much deeper study.

The majority of the action in the tales takes place in the far western corner of Norfolk, in a rough triangle bordered by King's Lynn, Wisbech and Downham Market, and more specifically in that area marked nowadays on the map as 'Marshland Fen'. Upon the western edge of this region is 'The Smeeth', a name that once applied to the whole Marshland. This was, in olden days, a fine pasture land about 2 miles or so across and of 1200 acres in extent. Over 30,000 sheep and cattle were grazed here by the 'Seven Towns of Marshland' to whom the plain was common, namely Tilney, Terrington, Clenchwarton, Walpole, West Walton, Walsoken and Emneth. In 1923 the area was made into the new parish of Marshland St. James, and the Smeeth is now a small village with both private and council houses, a school, pub, and small church. Somewhere in this region, say the legends, was born Tom Hickathrift "in the reign before William the Conqueror", the son of a poor labourer named Thomas Hickathrift. His father died not long after Tom was born, and his poor old mother was forced to work day and night to support him, since he was very lazy, and ate a huge amount, "for he was in height", says one story, "when he was but ten years of age, about eight feet, and in thickness five feet, and his hand was like unto a shoulder of mutton; and in all parts from top to toe, he was like unto a monster, and yet his great strength was not known".

The earliest printed mention of the giant Hickathrift occurs in a massive book by John Weever, entitled 'Ancient Funerall Monuments' and dated to 1631. (I) Weever reports a tradition of the Smeeth that once upon a time, a great conflict broke out between the inhabitants of the Seven Towns and their Landlord, over the rights and boundaries of the Smeeth, and the villagers were definitely getting the worst of the battle. At this time, Tom Hickathrift had got himself a job carting beer for a King's Lynn brewer, and he often had to drive his cart over the Marshland to Wisbech. Along comes Tom to the scene of battle and, in Weever's words "...perceiving that his neighbours were faint-hearted, and ready



Scale 1/2 inch = 1 mile (approx) = parish boundary.

to take flight, he shooke the Axell-tree from the cart, which he used instead of a sword, and tooke one of the cart-wheeles which he held as a buckler; with these weapons...he set upon the...adversaries of the Common, encouraged his neighbours to go forward, and fight valiantly in devence of their liberties; who being animated by his manly prowess, they...chased the Landlord and his companie, to the utmost verge of the said Common; which from that time they have quietly enjoyed to this very day".

Later antiquarian writers such as Spelman in about 1640(2), Cox in 1720(3), and Blomefield in 1808(4) follow Weever almost to the letter, apart from Dugdale(5), who is the 'joker in the pack', and who will be mentioned again shortly. However a significant divergence in story-line occurs in the early chapbooks, those slender pamphlets for consumption by the 'peasantry' that pedlars hawked on the village streets. The earliest still in existence is in the Pepysian Library at Cambridge, printed between 1660 and 1690, and bearing the title 'The History of Thomas Hickathrift'(6). Now this chapbook relates how Tom used to drive his brewer's cart between Lynn and Wisbech, but because of a fierce giant or ogre that dwelt in the Marshland, had to make a long detour around. One day Tom got fed-up with this, and on his next journey resolved to test the giant's might. From his cave, the giant saw Tom coming and leapt out to meet the trespasser, saying "Do you not see how many heads hang upon yonder tree that have offended my law! But thy head shall hang higher than all the rest for an example". To which Tom then gave the classic riposte, "A turd in your teeth for your news, for you shall not find me like one of them". The ogre enraged, dashed back into his cave for his gigantic club, while Tom up-ended his cart and took the axle and wheel for his sword and shield. With these weapons, and after a mighty battle, Tom beat the twelve-foot high giant into the ground and sliced off his head. After this deed Tom became the hero of the Marshland, and was henceforth known to all as 'Master' Hickathrift, a formerly distinct title that lost its significance in the 17th century.

These two alternate themes, the defeat of the Landlord and the slaying of the giant, both with wheel and axle, parallel one another until about the beginning of this century, when the Landlord version is forgotten and only the giant-slaying remains. The problem is, which tradition came first, or were there from the very beginning two separate but very similar tales

existing in parallel? From my own experience I would say that the former is the true problem, and that easily solvable. Although the 17th century Pepysian chapbook is the oldest extant, we can be fairly certain that there was an earlier original, probably of the 16th century, or at least the internal literary evidence seems to point that way. And, of course, the substance of the chapbook is derived from popular oral tradition of indeterminate age, as is the substance of the passage in Weever. But it is the process of folklore to embellish, to enlarge, and thus it is that the tyrant Landlord must have come first, to be enlarged and aggrandised in the popular mind and by the chapbook producers, catering to a less intellectual and discerning audience than that held by such as John Weever. For the same reason the Landlord has vanished from current Hickathrift tradition, leaving only the wicked giant to be overcome by our hero,

At this point Sir William Dugdale should be mentioned again, because of the curious role-reversal which he makes in his 1662 work 'The History of Imbanking...'(5). Dugdale somehow manages to twist the Weever story about, making



Hickathrift himself into the zealous owner of the Smeeth common-land, mightily defending himself with wheel and axle against the quarrelling villagers. This is a most peculiar reversal, and can only be explained by a hasty and inaccurate reading of the legend as told by Weever.

Whilst the antiquarians have no more to say about Hickathrift's exploits, the chapbooks on the other hand have a great deal more to tell. After his slaying of the Marshland ogre, Tom went into the cave and found there all the monster's ill-gotten hoard of gold and silver, enough to make him a rich man for life. "Tom took possession of the giant's cave", says the chapbook, "by consent of the whole company, and every one said he deserved twice as much more: Tom pulled down the cave, built him a fine house where the cave stood; and the ground that the giant kept by force and strength, some of which he gave to the poor for their common, the rest he made pastures of and divided the most part into tillage, to maintain him and his mother Jane Hickathrift." He then made a deer-park roundabout, and near his house built a church of St. James "...because he killed the giant on that day..." (which at the time of writing was on August 5th). Whether or not this part of the tale influenced the naming of the parish in 1923 I do not know, but perhaps it is significant that there has never been another church of St. James in the whole of the Fenland district.

With his new-found wealth and respectability Tom travelled far and wide through the Marshland, sometimes with his pack of hounds, to such festivities as "cudgel-play, bear-baiting, foot-ball, and the like". One such event, 'tho a minor one in the course of the story, will ne seen to gain a greater significance later on. He rode one day to where some men were laying wagers upon a football game, but he was a stranger to them and not allowed to join in; "...but Tom soon spoiled their sport; for he meeting the foot-ball, took it such a kick that they never found their ball more; they could see it fly, but whither none could tell..." The participants became angry at this, but Tom simply grabbed up a "great spar" from a ruined house, and flattened the lot of them. On his way home he encountered four armed robbers; once more in summary fashion he slew two and wounded the others, taking £200 from them for his trouble. But he later came upon a stout tinker barring his path, and neither would yield to the other (reminiscent of the meeting between Robin Hood and Little John), and so gave battle with staves. They were evenly matched however, until at last Tom flung down his staff, invited the tinker to his home, and became the best of friends.

At this point the earliest chapbook versions end, but later versions have a second part attached, obviously written by someone familiar with the original text, but equally obviously of a much later date. A typical example of this would be 'A Pleasant and Delightful History of Thomas Hickathrift', printed sometime in the mid-18th century. (7) Many others were produced all thru' the 18th and 19th centuries, all apparently based on the text of this one. (Norwich Central Library dated this particular chapbook to the 1600's, but by study of the internal evidence I have revised this to about 1750, and the revision has now been accepted). This continues the exploits of both Tom and the Tinker, how they were called to the Isle of Ely to help put down a 10,000 (one reference says 2,000) strong rebellion, but they did it all by themselves with naught but clubs as weapons: and when Tom's club broke, he "...seized upon a lusty, stout raw-boned miller, and made use of him for a weapon, till at length he cleared the field..." The King was so pleased with them that he promptly knighted Tom and gave the Tinker, whose name was Henry Nonsuch, a pension for life. As Sir Thomas Hickathrift then he turned for home, only to find his aged mother dying.

After this Tom's thoughts were bent towards marriage, and he began to court a "rich young widow" of Cambridge, named Sarah Gedyng. Tom had a rival in love though, whom he promptly trounced; then he came up against two hired Troopers whom he simply tucked under his arms until they, humiliated, swore never to trouble anyone again. But even as Tom rode to his wedding, up came his rival with 21 hired ruffians to stop him - to no avail, for Tom just took a

more than any other name could carry, This has been altered by oral tradition so that the bundle of straw, for a joke, has huge rocks hidden inside it, but Tom still lifts it without fuss. Likewise, the four armed robbers that he dispatched have become a large band of highway men whom he drove out of East Anglia. The chapter where Tom kicks a football out of sight has gained a wider audience, so that a Suffolk man can tell, in 1965, (9) of "Old Icklethrift", who kicked a ball "from Beccles to Bungay." One source (10) didn't like the idea of our hero dying of grief, so made him simply return home. "where he passed the remainder of his days in great content..."

One of the most interesting adjuncts to the Hickathrift legend was an earthen mound which stood at the Smeeth in a field south of the Village cross-roads, and not far from the former Smeeth Road railway station. The first mention of this I found quoted in Gomme (11), and supposedly occurs in the 'Journal' of the British Archaeological Association for about the year 1869. (12) However, I contacted the Society of Antiquaries of London, who now hold all the back copies of the 'Journal', and they were completely unable to trace the passage in question. But for the sake of completeness, this is what the alleged passage says: "A mound close to the Smeeth Road Station, between Lynn and Wisbech, is called the Giant's Grave, and the inhabitants relate that there lie the remains of a great giant slain by Hickathrift with the cart wheel and axle tree. A cross was erected upon it, and is to be seen in the neighbouring churchyard of Torrington (sic) St. John's, bearing the singular name of Hickathrifts Candlestick." The perplexed question of the cross will be dealt with shortly.

Next to mention the mound are Miller and Skertchly in 1878 (13), taking their information from a Mr. Jonathon Peckover of Wisbech; they speak of; "...a mound with the marks of an entrenchment visible around it. This is called the giant's grave, and the people of the neighbourhood have a tradition that it is hollow." Hillen (8), terms it "a low tumulus (somewhat levelled on one side) with distinct marks of an entrenchment." Dutt (14), who was something of an archaeologist, considered it "...an artificial mound, possibly a barrow.." In the same field, 'Hicifric's' or 'Hickathrift's Field', was a rough hollow or dry pond with some form of low bank around it. A former owner of Hickathrift Farm, which still stands opposite, said in 1955 (15) that there were two hollows "locally known as Giant Hickathrift's Bath and Feeding-bowl." But the pond with the bank round it was usually called 'Hickathrift's Hand-basin or Wash-basin'. Basil Cozens-Hardy in 1934 (16), with more antiquarian zeal than accuracy, claimed it to be truly a "Scandinavian doom ring", and it now seems likely that he derived this idea from the Kelly's 'Directory of Norfolk' for 1925 (17), where the 'doom-ring' was said to be "The 'moot' place twice each year of the earliest inhabitants, and of their descendants down to the close of the 18th century, of the Seven Towns of Marshland". Cozens-Hardy gave the added information that at midsummer the "commoners" met at the earthen mound, whilst at Easter they gathered at St. John's Gate, a little to the north. The truth of these statements I have yet been unable to verify. In March of 1929 the ponds were filled in with earth from the mound, and the field ploughed-up to make ready for the building of council houses. On my first visit to the site I was pleasantly surprised to find that most of the field is still rough and open, with only a small section of it taken up by houses and a school. A modern house or small terrace of houses that backs onto the field is still called 'Hickathrifts Field.'

Now to the vexed matter of the Smeeth Cross. You will recall that this ancient stone cross, once standing upon the 'Giant's Grave' mound, had been moved to the churchyard of Terrington St. John. Miller and Skertchly (13) agree with this, as do Porter (18) and various other commentators. However, Cozens-Hardy stated in 1934 that, when soil was being carted from the mound to fill in the ponds, "...a large pedestal, 2'9" square and 1'9" high with stop-angles was unearthed. Two feet of the shaft, now pointed, survive. The cross has been moved into the hedge next to the main road..." How could it be, I wondered, that a cross which had been stated 65 years before as having been moved several miles to another village is suddenly found in the very place it

TOM HICKATHRIFT: THE NORFOLK GIANT (continued):

As far as I know, there was no follow-up to this in the newspaper. Although I have yet to pinpoint Mr. Bodgers' house, there seems little doubt that this 'quaint stone monument' was in fact the Smeeth Cross. In the 'Eastern Daily Press' for December 12, 1964, a Mr. Colman Green reported that the cross was still visible, and learned a new name for it from a local farmhand: 'Hickathrifts Collar-stud.'

I am pleased to say that I have now uncovered virtually the whole recent history of the Smeeth Cross, although a little must be admitted as reasonable supposition. Prior to the mid- or late 19th century the cross was clearly visible upon the summit of the 'Giant's Grave' mound at the Smeeth; then, through the action of wind and weather it was covered-up by loose earth, and people thought it had been taken away. Antiquaries who came searching for it failed to find it, but discovering that there were others known by the same name at Terrington St. John and Tilney All Saints, surmised that it had been removed to one of those two places. The 18th century historian Tom Martin records at least three churchyard crosses at Terrington St. John, and as only one is now visible, it seems likely that it was one of these that was removed to Terrington Court. In 1929 during clearance work the Smeeth Cross was uncovered, still upon the mound. It was damaged by the workmen and pushed to one side of the road, where Mr. Bodgers' garden was shortly to be made. He buried it in 1950, but some time in the '50s or early '60s a part of the base was rescued and taken to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum. There it stayed until June 6th, 1979, when it was given back to the villagers of Marshland St. James and they, in belated celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, incorporated the remaining fragment in the base of the village sign, where it stands to this day, at the crossroads known as 'Hickathrift's Corner'. And I hope that this sorts the whole matter out for future writers!

Now to other aspects of the Hickathrift legend. The incident where Tom kicks a football out of sight has already been mentioned; but this seems to have combined, or become confused, with another episode where he throws a hammer 5 or 6 furlongs into a river. The results of this amalgamation are almost as confusing as the problem of the various crosses! The earliest written variant occurs in Hillen(8) in about 1891 where, although he seems unsure whether the missile is a hammer or a ball, he has altered the furlongs into miles, and says that Tom hurled it 6 miles from the Smeeth, to actually hit the church at Tilney All Saints; and, he says, "...the credulous villagers still point out the actual spot, in the chancel-end of their church, where the hammer (or ball) struck the wall..." Only a year later in 1892, Murray(20), speaking of the

church at Walpole St. Peter, says "...there are 2 circular holes in the north and south walls of the chancel opposite to each other, which tradition says were made by a ball kicked by (Hickathrift)..." So, already we have a divergence in the tales. In 1955 Mr. W.S. Parsons(21) adds another dimension, by reporting that Tom "...announced that he would kick a stone ball and that wherever it fell he would be buried. He kicked the ball from Tilney St. Lawrence and it hit the wall of Tilney All Saints church, roughly 2 miles away. The impact caused a crack in the church wall which, it was said, could not be permanently repaired..." Next with a variant is T.C. Lethbridge in his 1957 book 'Gogmagog'(22); He announces that Tom "...threw a missile...through the wall of Walpole St. Peter's church, where a small hole is still shown..." In 1966 Randell and Porter(23) say that Tom threw a stone 3 miles from a river to Tilney All Saints, and was buried where it fell. From the same source comes the claim that Tom beat the Devil in a game of football in the

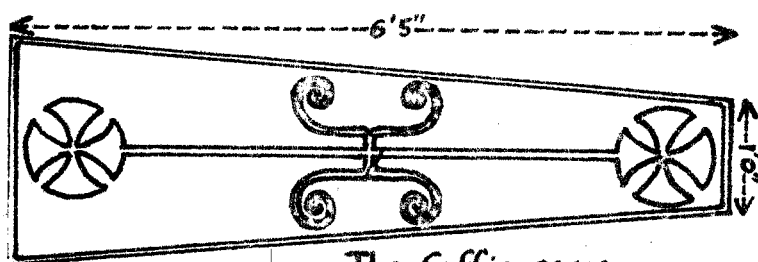


Effigy of Tom Hickathrift at Walpole St. Peter church.

churchyard at Walpole St. Peter, but during the match Satan kicked the stone ball at our hero, missed, and the ball went through the church wall. A compendium of legends in 1973 (24) gets the notion that Tom actually fought the Devil at Walpole, from whence Roberts (25), probably originated his claim that "Tom wrestles the Devil...and wins."

Once again we seem to have two parallel traditions arising from one or two similar incidents in the early chapbooks, but this time they may be roughly coeval. The vagueness of the targets in the ball-kicking and hammer-throwing episodes is, I think, sufficient to account for the basic variations, especially when we consider that there is an oval, roughly-patched spot in the east wall of Tilney church, about 2 feet across, and 7 or 8 feet directly above the alleged grave of Hickathrift. Also, at Walpole, the 2 small round holes are probably where the ends of vanished tie-beams of the church structure protruded through the walls. But at Walpole St. Peter there is another object which, I think, served to attract the associations with Tom the giant. The first reference to it is in Murray, 1892 (20), where he mentions "...a figure of a satyr supposed to be Roman, called by the country people 'Hickathrift', the traditional local giant, (which) is built into the outer wall at the junction of the chancel and north aisle..." Roberts (25) is over-stating things somewhat when he calls it "...a monstrous, carved stone giant's effigy (a la Cerne Abbas)...", as the little figure is only 21" high from head to toe! It is a very weathered image of crumbling sandstone on the north side of the church, and stands upon a corbel supporting a rood-stair window. Its identification with Hickathrift is somewhat suspect though, as it is of very indeterminate sex. Indeed the architectural historian Pevsner (26), calls it "a small caryatid figure, probably Roman." (A caryatid is a female used as a pillar or support).

If we assume then that the Walpole incidents are but variations on a basic theme, we are left with the fundamental action, common to many folk-tales, of the hero standing somewhere (probably the Smeeth), and throwing or kicking a stone for some distance, saying that where it lands he wishes to be buried. And in this case, the burial-place is confirmed by almost every writer from Weever (1631) onwards as being the churchyard at Tilney All Saints. From about the 1950s the inquisitive tourist has been shown a gravestone in the churchyard which is claimed to mark the grave of Tom Hickathrift the giant. It lies

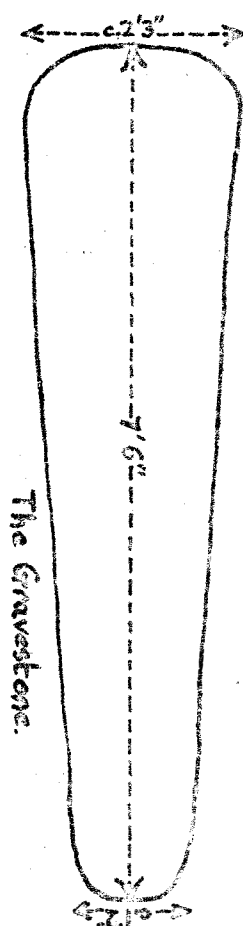


The Coffin-cover.

a few feet from the east end of the church, just below the rough patch noted above, and it is a simple plain slab of unadorned granite on an east-west axis, whose exact shape is hard to

discern because of the dense undergrowth around and over it. There have been various estimates of the length of the gravestone over the years, such as "no more than 7 feet" (24); "nearly 8 feet" (27, 28); and "8 feet long" (18, 25). Having accurately measured the stone, I can safely say that it is exactly 7' 6" long, not including a 3" split across the middle that has forced the two halves apart. This is supposed to be the very stone that Hickathrift threw from all those miles away.

However, if we go right back to 1631 and John Weever, we find: "In the churchyard is a ridg'd Altar, Tombe or Sepulchre of a wondrous antique fashion upon which an Axell-tree and a cart-wheele are insculped; Under the Funerall Monument, the Towne-dwellers say that one Hikifricke lies interred." Likewise Dugdale, in 1662 (5), refers to the gravestone "...whereupon the form of a cross is so cut as that the upper part thereof by reason of the flourishes... sheweth to be somewhat circular, which they will, therefore, needs have to be the wheel and the shaft the axletree." How is it that the present gravestone

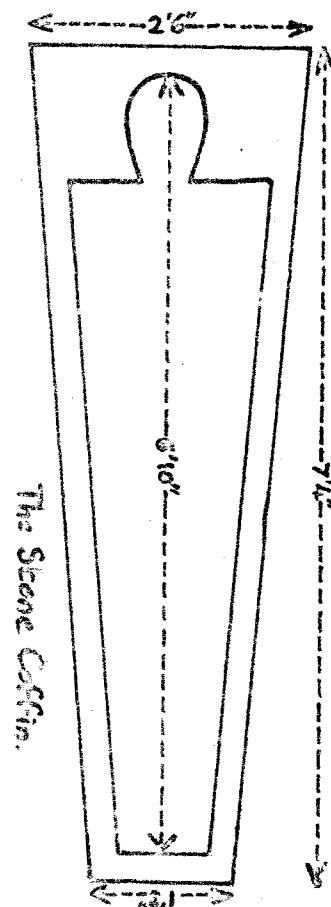


bears no resemblance whatever to this earlier carved 'Sepulchre'? As they say in all the best paperbacks, now at last the full story can be told!

The main point is that up to about 1810 the grave was complete; that is, consisting of both a coffin and a coffin-lid or cover, but after that date the two had become separated. In 1808, Blomefield (4), describes "the stone coffin" and the sculptured lid together. By the time of Sir Francis Palgrave's investigation around 1814 (29), things had changed. He ascertained "...the present state of Tom's sepulchre. It is a stone sarcophagus (coffin), of the usual shape and dimensions; the sculptured lid or cover no longer exists." Exactly where it had gone at that time, I do not know, but it certainly existed then and still does. In 1883 along came William White (30), who noted: "In the churchyard is part of a stone coffin, said to have contained the remains of Hickathrift..." Note the words "part of a stone coffin" because Hillen (8) also uses them:

"...until recently (1891) a part of a stone coffin, said to contain the remains of the Fenland hero, might have been seen to the north of the church. It measures 7'4" outside, and 6'10" inside; whilst the breadth at the head was 2½ feet, and at the feet 1'3"..." But he also mentions the lid having been "deposited at the west end of the north nave-aisle", actually inside the church itself. The following year, Murray (20), too says that "...here (the churchyard) until recently (it is now moved into the church, at the west end of the north nave aisle) was a grave slab with a cross and circle round it..." From then until Parsons (21) in 1955, only this coffin-lid inside the church is ever mentioned, but Parsons is the first to commit to print the existence of the current gravestone. It will be noticed in the accompanying drawings that not only do none of the items conform to the eight-foot stature of the chapbook giant, but also that none is exactly the same size as the others.

What seems to have happened is this: From the early days of the 17th century, there was a large stone coffin with a curiously-ornamented lid that was associated with the burial of the legendary giant Tom Hickathrift. Some time afterward the coffin and lid became separated, and the coffin vanished from sight. But there must have been a second, lidless, coffin, even larger (the one illustrated), that came to be thought of as the giant's. I say must have been, because the coffin as described by Hillen (7'4" long outside) is far too large for the lid (6'5" long) to have fitted it. I have it on expert advice (31) that the lid should have "...fitted it (the coffin) exactly. Usually most coffins and their lids were carved at the same quarry and transported as a single order. I would expect an entirely different lid to cover (this) coffin..." Around the 1880s this larger coffin was breaking-up, and 10 years later it had vanished completely, the carved lid having been taken inside the church for safe keeping. Thus, sometime in the first half of this century, a massive slab of granite was found or made, and placed over the remains of whoever it was that was thought to be the giant. Indeed, because it matches to within 2" the length of the coffin, it may have been specifically tailored to suit the con-



Before going back to Tom's grave, and thence to the question of his origins, I would like to briefly mention one site linked with him that, as with the tale of him kicking a ball from Beccles to Bungay, is decidedly way beyond the area that is normally his. I refer to the plaster-work figures to be seen on one of the many pargetted facades of the former 'Sun Inn', Church Street, Saffron Walden, Essex. The two figures, supposedly of Tom and the Wisbech giant in conflict, are modelled in bold relief in the plaster, part side-view, part full-face. Between them is a large raised ring, presumably the sun in the title of the inn. I have grave doubts however that this scene is anything what ever to do with the Hickathrift legend. I can find no reference before the 1930s for the identification; one source actually calls the figures 'Gog and Magog'. Also the figures as modelled do not match the tale of the chapbooks. For one thing, both effigies are the same height, whereas the Wisbech giant was supposed to be about four feet taller than Tom. Then again, although his opponent wields the traditional heavy club, 'Hickathrift' is provided with a sword and an ordinary, if rather small shield, instead of the wheel and axle of the legend. The building dates from about the 16th century, but the pargetting is known to be at least a century later. I am currently attempting to gauge a possible date for the figures by their style of clothing, but at the moment it seems to fit virtually anywhere between the 16 and 17th century. Just what or who the scene might portray I do not know, but I would guess that the identification with the tales of Hickathrift is a relatively modern occurrence.

[illegible]

No.75: GHOSTS: "...the hooded monk who occasionally walks the lane (Gypsy Lane) at night going from 'Barney Corner' towards the Baptists Chapel...Another myth is the white horse which once a year gallops across the drive of the Old Rectory from west to east, continuing in the direction of the one-time pub, The White Horse..." (A History of Bradfield St.George.Pt.I p.41, by L.A. & D.W.Aves, 1978.)

No. 77: FORTEANA: Quoted from the burial register of Kelsale, Suffolke: "Anc.dom. 1545...in june was borne a wonder, a monster, whose father was Richard Baldwey, of Kellsall...which childe from the Sholders upwarde has growenge two severall neks with two fayre heads standinge upon them... whose bodye was licke the forme and shape of all other Children..."

No. 79: GHOST: Eather's Barn stood in Debenham, Suffolk, until it was demolished in 1859. The cottage which stood next door (and still stands) is said to be haunted by "an old woman dressed in white without an head". (A Short History of Debenham, by P. Heywood, (1977), p.13.

I3.

PRECOGNITION IN ANIMALS.

Quite a lot of people think that animals - I use the word in the widest sense - can foretell coming events, generally of a disastrous nature. It would appear that there is some substance in this belief, as the following examples will show.

To start with an East Anglian case, concerning the earthquake of April 22nd 1884, which did so much damage in Essex. A man who lived in Maldon wrote a letter to the local paper, signed with a pseudonym, in which he stated that his bees suddenly ceased working before the shock occurred, remaining torpid while it was on, and did not become normal until after it had passed. Cattle were seen to be lying close together, instead of being scattered as they usually are, for several days before the shock. There was an un-natural absence of fish in all the rivers on the "1st of April; and no birds were heard to sing until the 'quake had passed. (1)

During World War II, at Westminster Central Warden's Post, much attention was paid to the behaviour of "Blitz", the black cat mascot. On the night of the great fire raid of May 10/11, 1941, he suddenly took a flying leap and landed smack in the middle of the officer's In-tray. After that there was little doubt that there would be a big air-raid, as indeed there was. (2)

During that same war, a gentleman and his friend went to see a performance of Sir Edward Germans opera, "Merrie England". In the course of this, the actress who plays the part of Jill All-alone, has to sing a song holding a cat in her arms. A placid type of animal would, of course, be chosen in such a case, but they noticed that during the song the cat became more and more excited, until she reached such a state that the actress had great difficulty in restraining her until the song was finished. Shortly after this a german V-2 rocket fell not far from the theatre. (3)

The night before the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906, a journalist, James H. Hopper, was walking home when he heard a sudden shrill scream from a horse in a nearby livery stable. He asked a stableman, who was standing in the doorway, what was the matter, and he replied that he didn't know, but that the horses seemed to be restless that night. Assistant Fire Chief John Condon Sr., was awakened by the fidgeting of the horses quartered below his bedroom, those of a wealthy citizen, Charles Haggie, started to snort and fret. Father Charles Ramm was also awakened by the barking of dogs in the city's dog pound which was some distance away from his home. (4)

In the Daily Mirror of April 2nd, 1960, there was an article By Bettie Tay, in which she asked the question, "Do animals have a sixth sense?" It was a bit deficient in matter, but she did say that officials of an animal protection Society reported that before the Agadir earthquake of that year, animals in their charge started howling, leaving the building hurriedly and generally running amok. She quoted the testimony of vets who say that such behaviour in animals was due to their having a more acute sense of hearing than human beings. They might in this case hear slight premonitory shock before a big 'quake, although it is odd that no human beings noticed any, but it certainly would not explain the "Merrie England" case, as V-2's did not make any sound.

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- (1). Peter Haining: The great English Earthquake, 1976; p.140.
- (2). Richard Collier: The City That Wouldn't Die, 1967, p.56.
- (3). Unfortunately I have mislaid the reference to this case.
- (4). Gordon Thomas & Max Morgan-Witts: Earthquake: The Destruction of San Francisco. 1981, pp 54/55.

W.J.CHAMBERS.

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U.F.O. NEWS...

A CEIII NEAR WOODBRIDGE?

Early in February this year I heard from my friend and associate, Brenda Butler, about an alleged UFO landing and CE3 near woodbridge in Suffolk. We arranged to meet and visit the area, and our initial visit took place on Wednesday, February 18, 1981.

Brenda told me of what she knew at that time; namely that she had heard from several people who claimed to have witnessed a UFO landing in Rendlesham Forest sometime around the beginning of January this year. She had very little information regarding the sighting at this time, save that an object with three legs together with 'entities' who appeared to be doing something to the craft, had been seen and that she had also heard that communication had been made between these 'entities' and personell from the nearby USAF base at RAF Bentwaters.

On February 18th, Brenda and I went to the air-base and made an appointment to see the Base Commander. Whilst we were talking to his secretary and arranging to see the commander, we mentioned that the sighting took place in January, to which the the secretary replied (without prompting) "The beginning of January?" When we confirmed that this was so, she seemed more determined for us to see the Commander - whom later that day we did see.

The Commander asked us for some form of identification. I showed him my BUFORA membership card, but he obviously did not accept it, and he said that without proper identification he could not say anything. As we told him what we knew of the sighting he told us, smiling all the time, that he didn't know anything about it. He then asked us if we were going to continue our investigation. I replied yes. What would we do with our information, he asked. I said we would do the same as them - file it!

Although the Base Commander would not say anything concerning the report,

we left his office with the distinct impression he knew far more than he was saying.

We then went to part of the forest where the landing had allegedly taken place, but we saw nothing out of the ordinary.

Several days later, Brenda heard from a man. He refused to give her his name, but said that the report was true and gave her directions as to how to get to the site where the object had landed. At a later date, this witness said that he had been told to speak to no-one about the sighting - and later still he denied all knowledge of it!

On February 24th, Brenda and I decided to pay another visit to Rendlesham Forest in an attempt to locate the landing site using the direction given to us by the anonymous caller. Unfortunately, owing to the fact that the directions were somewhat vague, we could not locate the place. Finally we went to the Forestry Commission office where we had an interesting conversation with the man on duty. He told us that he had been working in the office on January 1st, when a man walked in and said that he had just been talking to a farmer who, on December 29, 1980, had heard a very loud noise which had frightened his animals. The farmer also said that at the same time the area around his farm had been illuminated by a very bright, white light. He (the farmer) then telephoned RAF Woodbridge who sent men out to investigate. The whole episode, he said, lasted about 4 hours.

Unfortunately, no one seems to know who this farmer is - and we have heard that he has been told (presumably by the security people at the air-base) not to say anything about what happened. We have also been unable to trace the man who told this story to the Forestry Commission employee.

While we were in the office, another forestry worker came in and told us that his wife's friend's husband had also seen a UFO on that same night; and that his account tied-in with that of other witnesses. He then showed us on a map exactly where the whole incident was supposed to have happened, he also said that his men had been right through that part of the forest but had not seen anything untoward -

although it is worth noting that since the incident tree-felling has taken place in that part of the forest.

After leaving the Forestry Commission office, we went to talk to people living in the immediate area. At one farm house we were told that the residents had been visited by 2 men on January 1st, who had asked the same questions as us. One of these two unidentified visitors also mentioned that they had interviewed Forestry Commission workers. The people at this farm also told us that they had heard that something had happened that night on the air-base bomb disposal site which is nowhere near the sit pointed out to us by the Forestry Commission man. At all the other houses we visited everyone else said that they knew nothing of the report.

All though I am still investigating this report - with all the pieces of information gleaned so far, the account of the sighting seems to be as follows:

On the evening of December 28th, 1980, a farmer living near Rendlesham Forest was woken up by his restless cattle. He went outside to see what was wrong with them and noticed that the sky was lit-up as bright as day. At the same time he heard a loud and unusual noise unlike that of any aircraft (living next to an operational air-base he is very familiar with the sounds of aircraft). He contacted RAF Woodbridge/Bentwaters who sent out security men to investigate. The farmer then became aware of an object, seemingly in some sort of trouble, hovering over the forest. When the security men arrived, they too saw the object and they contacted the base who acknowledged by sending more personnel out. By this time the object had landed and three 'entities', surrounded by a white glow, were seen floating around the 'craft' which stood on three legs some 30 feet apart. These 'entities' appeared to be doing something to their craft. It is said that some sort of communication took place between the base personnel and the 'entities' and that the former were instructed to leave their weapons behind and to assist with the damaged craft (One report suggests that the craft was, in fact, removed to the air-base). While this was happening a member of the public witnessed it all, and what he says ties in with reports from other witnesses. The incident lasted about four hours, and we have also been told that during this period there were power failures in the area. Because of the involvement of the British Government, all of the witnesses who initially contacted us (some of them were air-base personnel) now refuse to talk further - and one witness has actually denied any knowledge of the incident. They say that they have been told to keep quiet and fear for their jobs if they do not. I myself know one of the witnesses personally and can vouch for his honesty - but even he now refuses to discuss the incident. For obvious reason I have not revealed the names of any witnesses.

On February 18th Brenda Butler 'phoned the Ministry of Defence about this incident and was told to write. She later received a reply to her letter, in which the MoD denied any knowledge of the incident and they said that they were unable to give any further information.

Dot. Street

EDITOR'S NOTE: As readers will no doubt have realised, Dot is now actively investigating UFO's on behalf of the BSIG and BUFORA. She can be contacted by Telephone on Lowestoft (0502) 84606.

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But exactly who was this Sir Frederick, and what influence has he had upon the growth of the Hickathrift legend? Blomefield(4) mentions an ancient book which had once belonged to Sir Frederick de Tilney, and which in 1727 was in the hands of the before-mentioned Peter le Neve. Blomefield took his extract from Weever(I), and this was as far as I could go for quite some time. Now I have found that Weever probably obtained his information from Hakluyt's 16th century 'English Voyages'(36), where he says: "This booke pertained in times past unto Sir Frederick Tilney, of Boston, in the Countie of Lincolne, who was knighted at Acon (Acre) in the land of Jurie, in the third yeere of the reigne of King Richard the first, A.D.1192. This knight was of a tall stature, and strong of body, who resteth interred with his forefather at Tirrington (sic), neere unto a towne in Marshland called by his own name Tilney. The just height of this knight is there kept in safe custody until this very day." I have yet to figure out just what this last sentence means! Confusion sets in once more when we notice that Hillen, Palgrave and Mee(37), say that Sir Frederick was slain at the siege of Acre and his body brought home, whilst Hakluyt (or rather the 'Tilney Book'), Cox, Thompson(38) and Rye also casually add that he was said to have been buried at Terrington St. John in 1189, that is, two years before he even fought! But whenever and however he died, if he was buried at Terrington, then the Tilney coffin-lid cannot be his. In fact, Dr. Butler of Leeds University(31) says that this lid is a mid-12th century stone and unlikely to be as late as the 1190s.

"The familt of Tilney", says Thompson(38), is of Norman origin, but derives its name from the Town of Tilney, in the county of Norfolk, and was one of the most ancient of knights' degree in England". The first of the family was one Frodo (shades of Tolkien!) who came to this country just before the Conquest, and held many lordships in this area. His brother Baldwin later came to be third Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, whilst his great-grandson was the Sir Frederick involved here. He was, says Thompson, "...a man of more than ordinary strength and stature, and had his chief residence at Boston. He attended King Richard I, anno 1190, into the Holy Land, was with him at the siege of Acon (Acre), where he is said to have performed prodigies of valour, and was there knighted for his services..." I can find no record or confirmation of his burial at Terrington, I could say the same thing with regard to Tilney. Wherever he was interred, I find it more than a strange coincidence that such a relatively small area of the Norfolk Marshland should hold both the traditions of a powerful, heroic giant AND the memory of an actual, historically large man famed for his stature, his strength, and his "Prodigies of valour."

Even the most incredible legend has a basis of truth behind it, and in my opinion Sir Frederick de Tilney is the basis upon which the character and traditions of Tom Hickathrift have grown. This idea has however been long ignored in favour of other explanations. John Weever(I), drew a parallel between Tom's defeat of the landlord's forces, and the exploits of a Scot named Hay, forebear of the Earls of Errol. Apparently, in the year 942, Hay and his two sons came upon a battle between the Scots and the Danes, and to spur on the faint-hearted Scots, took up an ox-yoke or a plough-beam and waded into the fray, driving the Danes off in dismay, to the greater glory of King Kenneth III of Scotland. How true this tale is I don't know, but the parallel with Hickathrift is obvious.

Miller and Skeritchly(I3) voice "...the opinion of some of the people of Marshland that the story is allegorical, that the giant whom Hickathrift subdued represents the sea, the wheel and axle, the weapons for banking it out, and that the name of Hickathrift is derived from 'Hitch' and 'Thrive'; the hero then, was some early encloser of the Fens who became powerful by continually moving his banks further out..." The last sentence bears thinking about. The etymology of Hickathrift above I find dubious, but I'll return to that in a minute.

Perhaps the favourite theory has been that Tom the giant is simply another form of the ancient Sun-god. Dutt(40), who thought little of the idea, tells us

that "...there are 'authorities', made mad by too much learning, who would have us believe that Hickafric driving along in his cart is nothing more or less than a form of the sun-god: that the wheels and the axle are the symbols of the sun and its rays; and that the great fight between Hickafric and the invaders of the Smeeth is symbolic of the sun drying-up the waters of a great flood." Of this ilk was T.C.Lethbridge (22), who speculated that Tom was a Celtic god of the Iceni people, from his resemblance to Taranis 'the thunderer' whose symbol was the sacred wheel, and who was equated with both Mars and Jupiter. His original name being forgotten, the Saxons then called him Hiccafrith, a name of Lethbridge's own invention, which he says (with what justification I do not know) means "the trust of the Hiccas, or Iceni". Lethbridge also dredges out of his own confused mind the notion that Tom was "humanised in the Middle Ages into a man who fought a Dane..." A Dane? That sounds like the Scotsman Hay if anybody. Gomme (II) compares Tom's exploits with those of the Scandinavian hero Grettir the Strong, and came up with some parallels that are only superficial at best.

Let's get back to the question of Tom's name. For a start, "Thomas is found in England before the Norman conquest only as a priest's name" (34), so he and his father cannot have been born, as the chapbooks say, "in the reign before William the Conqueror". But his surname is a very different matter; it is certainly unusual! So far I have come across 17 different versions of Hickathrift, including Hikifrick, Hikifrike, Hic-ka-thrift, Hycophric, Hicifric, Icklethrift and Hycathrift. One would expect, in common a dialectal usage, a transposition of those final consonants; thus, Hickathrift would become Hiccafrith - but apart from Lethbridge's invented 'Hiccafrith', this has not occurred. The printed version which, even as far back as the Pepysian chapbook, was 'Hickathrift', must have exerted wide influence. A derivation from 'Hitch' and 'Thrive' I find untenable, but I can offer little in place of it. If we take the syllables separately, we have first to deal with the stem 'Hick-' or 'Ick-', which is a constant. If it does originate with the tribal name 'Iceni' it would be a rare survival indeed. Perhaps 'hick', a by-form of 'Richard', meaning a farmer or countryman; or 'hycgan', Old English for 'think'; or perhaps it is O.E. 'ic', meaning 'I'. Then again, 'Hicel', 'Icel', 'Yccel' and 'Ica' are all well-attested Anglo-saxon personal names.

As for the second syllable '-thrift', or '-frick', how about OE 'þryccan': 'oppress'; or maybe OE 'fraec': 'bold, gluttoness'; or 'frecne': 'terrible', or even perhaps OE 'þraec' from Old Norse 'þrekr': 'force, courage'. The possibilities are well-nigh endless, but the justification for any of them, in any combination, is tenuous. It is, I think, best to simply accept the name Hickathrift as curious, and leave it at that.

To round it all up then, this is what I believe to be the convoluted origin of the legend of Tom Hickathrift: First of all we have Sir Frederick de Tilney, a giant of a man with great strength; a knight who performs "prodigies of valour"; and most important of all, a strong local identity. Although his main home is at Boston, perhaps he is responsible for the embanking of various marshes, and perhaps he even champions the villagers in a dispute with their landlord over common-rights. When he dies, maybe in battle, he is buried very close to home, and the memory of his stature and valour does not fade. After a time, the 'wicked landlord' is altered in popular imagination, with the aid of the chapbooks, into an evil giant who menaced the Marshland, and Sir Frederick becomes Hickathrift, to do battle with him. Other little exploits are added from time to time, some probably borrowed from other champions, and some from the stock of legend current among the Scandinavian peoples, who have a strong inheritance in this area. As Tolkien (41) might put it, Tom, Hay, Grettir, Sir Frederick and all the adventures adhering to them, are put into the Pot and stirred well into the mythological soup. There is a large mound or burial barrow nearby, and like many such sites, the folk think it hollow and name it the 'Giant's Grave'. Whose grave is it though? Well it can't be Tom's because he's buried at Tilney - or was it Terrington? So it must be the grave of the evil giant that Tom killed, and if so, that must be where his

cave stood and where Tom later built his house. And of course there is an ancient cross on top, that looks something like a candlestick, or when the shaft has gone, like an old-fashioned collar-stud! and there are others too, at Tilney and Terrington, so that must be Tom's as well. One has even got his finger-marks in the top.

At Walpole the little figure on the church wall is noticed; and who else can it be but our hero Tom; a monument to something he did there? Well we know he was very fond of challenging all-comers to a game of football, and whoever he played against played dirty, kicking the ball at Tom like that, but missing and shooting it straight through the church wall. Knowing Tom, it was probably Old Nick himself!

By now, Sir Frederick and his place of burial are completely forgotten, but at Tilney, the huge coffin and the carved lid are noticed - and just look at those carvings! If those aren't a pair of wheels and the axle between them, well I'll eat my hat! Blast boy, this must be old Tom's grave, just look at the size of it! Then of course, there's the hole or patch in the wall just above it; so this is where that football went to when he kicked it out of sight!

From such apparently unrelated objects and incidents, I believe, the myths of Tom Hickathrift the giant has grown; whilst other legendary themes may have crept in to enlarge the tale, to me, Sir Frederick de Tilney is the likeliest progenitor for Hickathrift's character - a strong man for a strong myth.

I would like to express my thanks and acknowledge the assistance and information received from the following: Mr.W.J.Chambers of Saffron Walden; Rev.C.N. Bales of Marshland St.James; Rev.A.J.Clements of Tilney All Saints; Mr.L.V. Grinsell of Bristol; Mr. & Mrs. I. Clayton Caldwell of Terrington Court; Ms. Rosalinda M.C.Hardiman, former Curator of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum; The Folklore Society; Miss I.B.McClure of the British Archaeological Association; Norwich Local Studies Library & the Norfolk Record Office; Mr.E.Dowman, Assistant to the York Herald of the College of Arms; Mr.A.J.Camp, Director of the Society of Genealogists; Mr.F.H.Thompson, General Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London; Lincoln Central Library, & Lincoln Castle Archives; Mr. J.Graham-Campbell, Secretary of the Society for Medieval Archaeology; and Dr. L.A.S.Butler, Head of the Dept. of Archaeology at the University of Leeds.

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them from evil spirits. The stone bears the inscription:

Ella Morse, September 8
MDCCLII
aged XXXVII
By thy Cross and Passion
By thy precious Death
Good Lord deliver us.

But Reg Drake says the recent moving of the headstones might mean that the cross's action is not due to Ella Morse at all - since the reorganisation of the stones, it is possible that her cross is lying on the grave of another. But Mr. Sandell pours cold water on any unearthly speculation, and feels there is probably a scientific reason behind the phenomenon.

"There must be something behind it all, something quite simple; I don't believe for a moment that it is ghosts or anything like that." But he is sure that the turning is not due to vandals. "It is far too heavy to be moved by anyone", he said. "There is no way I can turn that stone." "I think the best thing to do is to wait, and see what happens. Come back in a year's time, or two years' time, that's what I tell people. Who knows what might happen eventually."

Meanwhile he is noting the present position and waiting along with others in the town, for the next sign of movement."

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